GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2957
ANSWERED ON:15.03.2016
Objectives of PDS
Kaswan Shri Rahul

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and the beneficiaries of Antyodaya Anna Yojana, State-wise;
(b) whether the Public Distribution System (PDS) has been successful to achieve the objectives envisaged therein, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
(c) whether the Government proposes to strengthen and streamline the PDS and if so, the details thereof; and
(d) whether the Government proposes to develop the scheme as e-PDS and introduce biometric system/smart cards to make it more efficient and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)
(a): The Government has enacted National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) which inter alia entitles upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population to receive foodgrains at subsidised prices under Targeted Public Distribution System(TPDS), thus covering about two thirds of the population (about 81.35 crore persons) of the country. The Coverage under Act has been delinked from poverty estimates and the eligible households covered under the Act comprise of Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and priority households. There is no BPL category under NFSA. State wise coverage under NFSA is at Annex-I
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(b): Targeted Public Distribution (TPDS) is an important part of Government's policy for ensuring food security in the country. There have been some challenges which are leakages/diversion of foodgrains, inclusion/exclusion errors, existence of bogus/ineligible ration cards, non-viability of fair price shop operations, etc. that weaken the Public Distribution System. Further, Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments wherein operational responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible beneficiaries, issuance of ration cards to them and supervision and monitoring of functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) rest with the concerned State/UT Governments.
(c): Strengthening and streamlining of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is a continuous endeavour. To improve functioning of TPDS, Government has been regularly issuing advisories and holding meetings, conferences, etc. wherein State/UT Governments are requested for review of list of beneficiaries, improving the offtake of allocated foodgrains, ensuring timely availability of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops (FPSs), greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, improved monitoring and vigilance at various levels, improving the viability of FPS operations, etc.
Further, TPDS (C) Order, 2015 inter-alia requires State Government to take following important steps for reforming TPDS:-
1. Ensure through Authorised Agency, Physical delivery of foodgrains at FPS.
2. Obtain Monthly certificate confirming delivery of allocated foodgrain at FPS and its distribution to eligible household.
3. Application of IT tools for functioning of PDS.
4. Ensure monitoring of end-to-end operations of TPDS through electronic platform.
5. Notify Internal Grievance Redressal Mechanism.
(d): With a view to modernize the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) Government has initiated a plan scheme on 'End-to-end Computerisation of TPDS Operations' during 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) on cost sharing basis with the States/UTs. The Costs are being shared on 90:10 basis with North Eastern States and on 50:50 basis with other States/UTs. This scheme comprises activities, namely, digitization of ration cards/beneficiary and other databases, computerization of supply-chain management, setting up of transparency portals and grievances redressal mechanism. As part of beneficiary data digitization, States/UTs have been requested to seed the Aadhaar numbers wherever available so as to weed out the ineligible/bogus/duplicate beneficiaries. Further, guidelines for Fair Price Shop (FPS) automation have been sent to All States/UTs on 11.11.2014. FPS automation involves, installation of Point of Sale (PoS) devises at FPS for biometric authentication of beneficiaries, recording of sales to beneficiaries at the FPS, and uploading of transaction data in central server.
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